

# **Planning and managing a successful event in Company X**



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ABSTRACT

The thesis is written for Company X, which is a non-profit and community-driven organization, a sister organization to several well-known companies in the Metropolitan Area of Finland. Company X inspires people from diverse backgrounds, origins, and skillsets to consider either starting a business of their own or to join a startup ecosystem and work for existing startup companies for better skills utilization and acquisition. The community encourages people by organizing different kinds of events, workshops, trainings, talks, and programs, which further help people get new knowledge and ideas, develop new skills and competences, network and grow professionally. This thesis discusses how to plan and conduct a successful event for Company X. The event is named Idea Development Week and it was held from 11th to 15th of March 2019.

The thesis aim is to define the mechanism of planning and organizing an event for Company X. Such an industry as event management and the process of the event outlining is discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis. After the Idea Development Week (IDW) event, the data was obtained by spreading and collecting feedback questionnaires for further analysis. To analyze the answers both quantitative and qualitative approaches were implemented. The practical study implementation deliberates the stages in planning IDW for Company X and gives recommendations for future scheduled events.

The main takeaway from the analysis of feedback forms is the affirmation that the Idea Development Week event was fairly successful. However, there is always room for future development. It mainly concerns making changes to the existing respond system (RSVP), feedback questionnaires content, improvements in the event flow during each of the program days and creating partnership opportunities with invited speakers.

**Keywords** Event Management, Event Organization, Event Planning, Event Marketing

**Pages** 49 including appendices 3 pages

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

The modern event industry is a universe in which contractors and customers live according to their special laws. Each event is a unique occasion where any detail can change everything. Each company creates events for different purposes. It could vary from internal gatherings inside the company's premises to external bigger occasions targeted to bigger scale audiences.

The reasons for the events can be very different. Depending on the goals and nature, it can be distinguished the following types of occasions: competitions; seminars, workshops, advanced training courses; fundraising events for various purposes and meetings; anniversaries, special events, ceremonies, greetings, celebrations; sports activities; musical performances and concerts; mass celebrations. The goal is to consider each occasion correctly and organize an event with maximum benefit.

Managing even the most modest-scale event requires considerable effort and cost, both intellectual and material. And for effective training, there is a need to clearly understand the ultimate goals, objectives and desired reaction from an audience. After answering these questions, it is possible to begin the actual event management. (Lindsey, 2011)

It is important to remember that when preparing an event, it is necessary to consider a huge number of factors. The selection of the venue and the organization of a show program are far from the most important of them. An aspect to always remember while preparing an event is the meaning that carries the event, what goals it is intended to achieve. Taking into account the corporate style and culture of the company, to clarify the wishes of the guests, smoothly fitting them into the action script would also help to make any event a successful one. Moreover, for the event to become an unforgettable experience for everyone, it is necessary to make people wonder, and every time to design unusual scenarios.

### 1.1 Purpose of the thesis

The topic of this thesis was contributed by the author's deep interest in the field of event management and event industry. That is why for the passage of the final internship and writing a thesis, the author did not doubt to prefer the company and the topic directly related to the organization and conduct of various kinds of events.

The aim of the thesis is to write a comprehensive event planning guideline for Company X that could ease the event organization process, primarily focusing

on the main aspects of event organization such as planning, coordination and execution, and post-event evaluation.

In Company X there is only one employed event manager who is not only in charge of coordinating any event arrangements but also in many other management tasks. Therefore, he is not able to fully concentrate on planning and performing events and need additional help. Event organizing tasks are generally done by interns and trainees, whose professionalism is open to question. Due to the fact that similar kinds of events happen regularly in Company X, it is necessary to produce an efficient plan of how to arrange and execute any events types. With the help of such a practical guideline, future event coordinators could have an overview of:

- what should be done at first,
- how to get involved necessary stakeholders,
- how to promote events,
- how to raise the interest of people to join events,
- what are the agile tools that could ease the event management process,
- how the actual event execution is carried out,
- what kinds of post-event actions are needed.

Therefore, the practical study helps anyone who would do future events for Company X. In the empirical study, the author studies the important steps of event planning for the Company X event called Idea Development Week. Furthermore, the deep analysis of the Idea Development Week (IDW) event with the help of qualitative and quantitative methods is executed to better understand if Company X's goals were able to be achieved. Therefore, the idea of this study is to find out how future events could be planned and managed better.

## 1.2 Research problem

Company X regularly organizes various events for people who want to get new knowledge and experience, such as talks, workshops, educational programs. However, as mentioned above, Company X does not have experienced managers who oversee event planning and management in a permanent position. Company X often changes the staff of interns who come completely without experience and often do not know what to do and where to start in the beginning. That means that the organizational processes have not been so efficient lately. That is why the guideline based on this study will be a useful material for any person who needs to organize an event from the very scratch to the winning final. Therefore, the research question of this thesis is how a successful event for Company X can be organized and executed in a changing business environment.

### 1.3 Research approach and methodology

The knowledge base is created to discuss event management and its organizational process. It is gathered from a literature review of several various books on event organization. The theoretical part of the thesis consists of discussing the theories related to all steps towards a successfully planned event, such as definitions, event types and objectives, action plan, the planning stages, stakeholder management, event marketing, risk awareness, the actual production, and after-all event evaluation. The author of this thesis was able to lead the organization and evaluation of the event for Company X independently applying the theoretical knowledge received from the literature discussed in this thesis.

The practical part of the thesis was evaluation research that focused on the collection of feedback from the visitors of the actual event organized in Company X and evaluation the feedback. This evaluation research mainly represents quantitative research. The data was collected through questionnaires that were given out at the end of the event. Both types of questions, closed and open-ended were implemented. The open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively.

As practice in Company X shows, giving out and collecting the printed feedback forms gathers the most reliable and numerous information from the audience. Spreading out the online questionnaires through emailing will not give any trustworthy results as people tend to ignore those messages after the event has already passed. Consequently, the paper feedback form collection has been chosen in order to get the participants' opinions about IDW. The outcomes of the analysis give comprehensive conclusions and recommendations for future similar events at Company X.

### 1.4 Company X overview

Company X is a non-profit and community-driven organization, a sister organization to several well-known companies in the Capital Area of Finland. It promotes diversity as the engine for business growth. By inspiring people from diverse backgrounds, origins, and skillsets, Company X suggests people consider either to start a business of their own or to join the startup ecosystem and work for existing startup companies for better skills utilization and acquisition. The community encourages people by organizing different kinds of events, workshops, training, talk, and programs, which further help people get new knowledge and ideas, develop new skills and competences, network and just grow professionally. (Company X.org, n.d)

Even though the Company X started its activity only in 2016, it has been already quite successful during recent years. In 2018, Company X reached more than 5300 participants at different programs and hosted around 260 events, which greatly increased the employability of those people. (Company X.org, n.d)



Another idea behind the thesis writing process is that Company X holds a series of workshops in the Idea Development Week event which is organized about two times per year. This program provides participants with the necessary skills to take their business ideas further and/or test where their professional journey begins in the start-up world. Due to the inconstancy of fixed-term employees, the IDW event could not be executed on the same professional level because of the lack of interns' experience.

The author of this thesis worked as an Event Producer intern for Company X between January and May 2019. One of the main projects the author was involved in and completely responsible for is planning, creating and evaluating the Idea Development Week event that was held from 11-15<sup>th</sup> of March 2019 on Company's X venue. From the author's point of view, organizing the event without any ready-made checklist or basic standard plan for creating an event is a complicated experience.

### **1.5 The structure of the thesis**

The thesis starts with the theoretical part (chapter 2) explaining the processes and structure of the event industry. Such topics as important definitions, brainstorming of required steps, proper marketing, event execution, and evaluation details are covered and carefully explained. After that, the mechanisms and milestones of the Idea Development Week event organization are provided and illustrated. The event planning guideline (chapter 3) for Company X has been created based on experience gained from the empirical study. This guideline consists of the necessary procedures for the successful execution of the IDW corporate event. To evaluate the effectiveness of the organized occasion, the feedback of visitors has been collected through questionnaires. Thereupon, the data is evaluated (chapter 4) to define recommendations for Company X. These recommendations (chapter 5) would help future event organizers to achieve the company's goals easier and faster. Finally, at the end of the thesis author concludes (chapter 6) the whole study and findings.

## **2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This second chapter introduces the theories of event planning and management. It is inevitable that knowing theory and specific literature is required when starting the event organization. The author starts with brief historical aspects of the event management, then will explain the main definitions that are used among event planners. After that, the author continues by explaining different types of events and purposes that they are aiming in detail and will discuss who are the main stakeholders that event managers are cooperating closely with.

This chapter of the thesis aims to get a better and more detailed awareness of the event planning industry and the terminology used. The further mentioned theories are just mere reflections and experience in the industry of professionals organizing the events in a corporate world. These examples give an understanding of how this industry works.

## **2.1 History of the event industry**

Historically it can be claimed that all sorts of meetings and events helped maintain friendship between clans and tribes. Cleopatra could be called one of the first event planner, as she loved to fantasize and make up meetings with her lovers. Later in the Middle Ages, the French royal personalities continued to organize dance parties, namely, high-ranking rich women who managed the organization. Everyone dressed up in costumes, popular music of those times played, and people chatted and had fun all evening long. Industrial Revolution came in as the aid for people as there arose the need for organizing the business meetings for organizations to grow and expand beyond, to discuss the cooperation and further development. Since people started making more money, it meant they could spend more on events organization. (A Brief History of Event Management, 2018)

Despite the fact that the organization of events as a specific form of activity has existed since time immemorial, it emerged as an independent industry not so long ago – around past three decades in question (approximately 1990-2019 years period), before that it had been an integral part of other sectors of the economy: hotel business, tourism, show business. This significantly slowed down the development of event management as a separate form of activity. Now in the field of organizing event have appeared professional organizations, there are specialized literature written, certification programs created, even a higher education could be pursued in this area. Gradually, the organization of events has become recognized by the industry with its technologies, market players, rules and traditions. (Sven Damm, 2011, p. 1-3)

As mentioned above, event production has grown into a major business sector these days. For instance, in the United States, the revenue estimation is to get around \$5billion in 2019 with more than 130.000 employees and with revenue growth of 2.9% during 2014-2019. (IBIS World Market Research Report, 2019)

## **2.2 Definitions of key concepts**

Julia Silvers defines an event as “an experience, carefully crafted to deliver an impact on the person in attendance”. Each event is held to bring people together to share experiences and obtain measurable results. First of all, they are subdivided into internal and external events. Internal ones are organized for employees of the company (refer to the Human Resource department procedures), external - for visitors or partners, and belong to the field of Marketing and Public Relations. Events are characterized by solemnity and

interactivity, festive or entertaining atmosphere. When organizing an event, it is important to remember that this is not just an occasion aimed solely at rest and relaxation, but a serious way of conveying an advertising and informational message that follows its clear and specific objectives. (Sillers, 2004, p.2-4)

Event management is the project management of planning and managing an occasion. Event management is an activity that is needed in order to organize a unique and spectacular event. Any event should have a special highlight to be remembered. It includes defining the event objectives, its target audience, the venue choice, scheduling, marketing and promotion, team building, logistics matters and everything else that needs coordination to make any event a successful one. Planning and coordination of an event, which includes risk management assessment, budgeting, venue arrangements, speakers' invitations, decorations, and catering are called the event planning process. It is usually taken care of by the event coordinator. In order event to be successful, there must be enough time to carefully plan it. The event coordinator must take into account many aspects when starting the planning. (Shone & Parry, 2013)

The event coordinator is a multifunctional specialist who performs different tasks necessary for the preparation and realization of a high-quality event. The organizer is a professional that provides an efficient organization of the workflow, people management - and all this is for maximum customer satisfaction. The responsibilities of the event organizer are quite varied. According to Silvers, the main responsibilities of the event organizer are the following:

- Developing a concept, writing a back-up script, generating new ideas, finding ways to best implement them.
- Drawing up estimates, calculating the expenses necessary for the organization.
- Selection of location, reaching agreements with employees, signing contracts if necessary.
- Reporting on the outcome of the event, evaluating the effectiveness of the event.
- Engaging contractors (restaurants, hotels, logistics services), managing their work, coordinating, controlling.
- Working with documents, accounting, technology.
- Health and safety issues.
- Ongoing coordination on various issues related to the organization of conferences/business meetings/scientific forums and other events. (Sillers, 2004)

The event organizer's responsibilities may be broader depending on the agency where the event manager works, client requests, the type of event. (Sillers, 2004, p.2-4)

Conferences, workshops, team buildings, training, sports activities, in a nutshell, events happen every day worldwide. Knowledge of formal and informal event

practices used by various organizations is the key to the success of the event coordinator. Understanding corporate culture and its differences in various organizations is essential knowledge of the event coordinator. In the New Oxford American Dictionary, the culture is explained as "the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society". (Stevenson & Lindberg, 2010). Thus, culture determines and influences what kind of atmosphere exists between employees, how employees behave, the way they think and carry out various tasks. This significantly affects the functionality and performance of the organization. To achieve personal success and satisfy the corporate client, the event coordinator needs to have a clear understanding of the corporate culture and how the culture differs from organization to organization. (Mikolaitis & O'Toole, 2002, p.1-6)

### 2.3 Event Types

Since events are organized for different purposes, audiences, and scale, there are many ways to define different types of events. Various academic researchers have classified occasions using various criteria. Further, the author will mention and give examples of some classifications of events discussed by scientists.

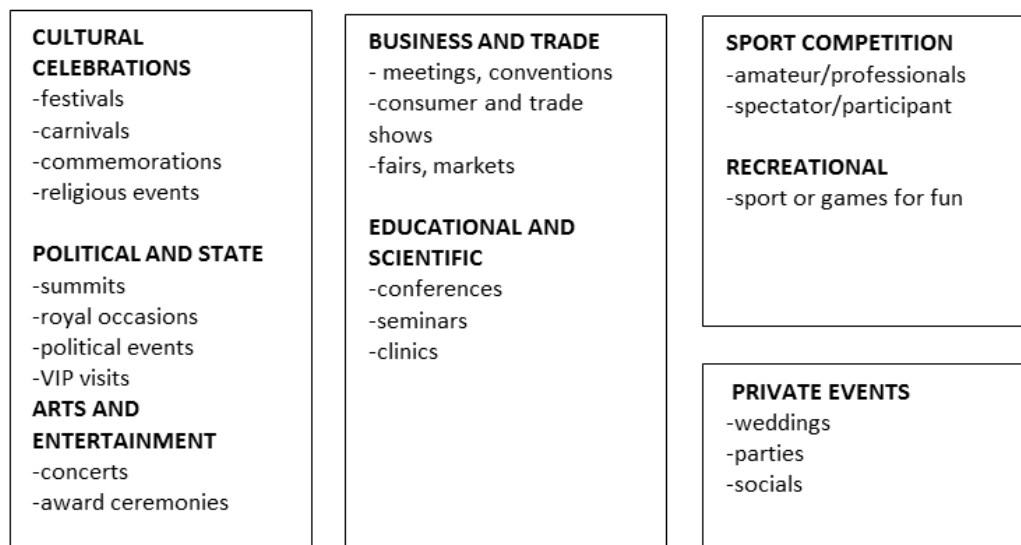


Figure 1. Typology of planned events. (Getz, 1997, p.7)

The figure 1 above represents how Getz in his "Event Management and Event Tourism" (1997) book explains the typology of events and divides them into seven types of planned public ones and one category of private planned events. The appearance of planned public events is evident in almost all cultures and communities. As can be seen above, cultural celebrations include carnivals, festivals, historical and religious gatherings. Political and state events occur frequently these days as the necessity for politicians to have summits, royal, and VIP meetings, where the political discussions take place. (Getz, 1997)

Every human being needs entertainment in order to keep up with work and life balance. Therefore, art and entertainment events such as concerts, gala shows,

theater shows become a nice way to spend weekends. The next type of planned event that Getz distinguished is business and trade one. It entails fairs and markets where a consumer could buy goods, meetings and conferences, trade shows. Educational and scientific events cover research conferences, seminars, workshops or congresses. All of them involve a learning environment with information gathering and exchange. (Getz, 1997)

From a global point of view, there are many varieties of sports competitions. Mainly, the idea behind is to differentiate professional sportsmen from beginners. Most sporting events or games are mainly held for entertainment purposes, and they have been allocated to the recreational category. In addition, events can be personal or private. These include parties in honor of the day of the wedding or birthday, anniversary, graduation and corporate occasions. (Getz, 1997)

Another way to categorize special events was described by Shone and Parry in their practical handbook for successful event management. The researchers divided events into four categories as shown in Figure 2.

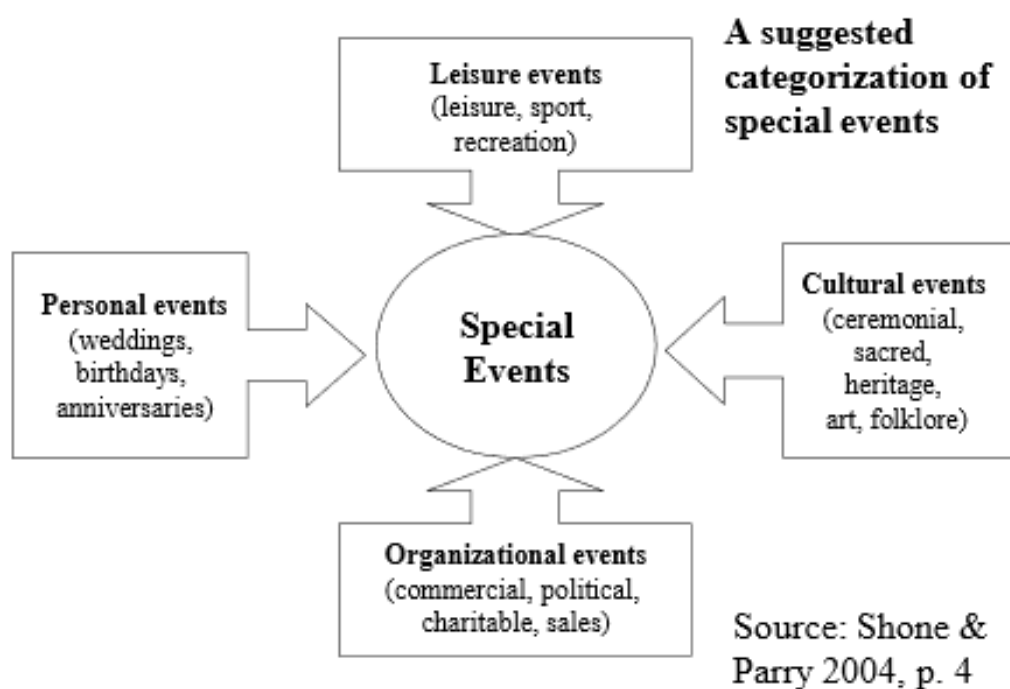


Figure 2. Categorization of special events. (Shone & Parry, 2004, p.4)

Organizational events most probably are the biggest category as it includes all the types of commercial and trade events, and political meetings that always require lots of attention. Personal events are arranged upon the need and request of people that want to celebrate something. Leisure activities bring attractiveness and mainly they are done for generating profit. Nevertheless, cultural events are about the spiritual and ceremonial environment, heritage and culture gatherings. Shone and Parry (2004, p. 4) provided a classification that determines events according to the objective, main aim, and goals and

considering which value the event brings to the people. The scholars also point out that sometimes a strict categorization could be misleading, since an event may belong to several groups simultaneously.

## 2.4 Action Plan

Any process of planning and conducting an event begins with the preparation of an action plan. According to Lindsey, an action plan is a document that defines goals, specific actions, requirements for the results, deadlines and performers of these actions. This document needs to be accessible to the whole team, in which everyone can see each other's tasks and the big picture. (Lindsey, 2011)

First, a list of main tasks is prepared, and then as detailed as possible in the form of specific steps that need to be taken. It is important to indicate in the plan the time required to complete the tasks. This phase is often underestimated, and planning gets slower than expected. (Lindsey, 2011)

In order for the Action Plan and the event itself to be as effective as possible, the following questions need to be clearly answered: who is the targeted audience, what demography is awaited, how many people are expected, what are the goals of this event, what will the guests receive in return for attending, and what did the guests like and dislike earlier on event like this. This would help organizers to create an added value and make the occasion memorable for the visitors. (Lindsey, 2011)

It is also important to determine which date will be preferable, which speakers and partners should be invited, what to talk about and what to present to the guests. Next, preferably there is a need to plan a small buffet and determine a budget for it, to come up with a theme and design for the event, and to understand whether a dress code will be needed. To successfully create an Action Plan, the coordinator must clearly understand the goals and objectives of this event. (Silvers, 2004)

In total, the following sections of the document are generic and the most important requirements in determining an action plan:

1. Event name
2. Event reasons, objectives, and goals
3. Event managers and responsibility division
4. Deadlines
5. Performers/speakers
6. Planned dates for events
7. Schedule
8. Results requirements
9. Reporting and control
10. Any additional information. (Lindsey, 2011)

The presence of such a document, which includes a description of the event and its full plan, leads to a constant check of the requirements for the event at the planning and execution stage of event management. (Lindsey, 2011)

## 2.5 Events objectives

First of all, there is a need to define the goals and objectives of the event, these actions need to be done in order to create any event. The quality of that criteria will influence all upcoming processes and other factors, such as estimation of expenses or timings. Several goals and objectives may be the reason for the event, and the idea of quality is to follow them and perform each of them as planned. According to this requirement, companies are organizing corporate events to educate their personnel, improve skills and public relations, recognize and define useful proactivity, try launching new products, and create an important milestone for their strategies. As presented by Mikolaitis & O'Toole (2002), the successful event is the combination of clearly stated goals, proper event planning, checking up the expected milestones and following the action plan created for the event. In case of any changes, the event coordinator must react on time and act in a way, so the event goals will be achieved.

It is possible to define several measurable objectives of an event, such as:

- Number of attendees
- Involved staff
- Sponsors' investments
- Profitability
- Media involvement
- A number of regular visitors and returnees (Van der Wagen & White, 2010)

Following the defined goal eases the event coordinator's job and allows him or her to focus on performing and executing one's role. Later, analyzing the outcomes, the coordinator may improve the full process development of the next activities and enhance the necessary areas in order to achieve higher goals. (Van der Wagen & White, 2010)

## 2.6 The planning processes

David Michael Rich, a professional event marketer, claimed that there are eight crucial steps in the event planning process that help in developing its strategy, involve the stakeholders, create a unique culture, attract an audience, and make the interactive design of the event. (Rich, 2015)

Firstly, at the very early stage of preparation for the event, all interested parties to the process should be connected: partners, sponsors, subcontractors, and others. Before embarking on the implementation and active preparations for the event, a strategy for cooperation with each of them must be developed. It

is advised to make sure that the actions of each of the parties are coordinated and, ultimately, serve the achievement of the goal. (Rich, 2015)

Secondly, the event manager must state clear goals and objectives. Otherwise, his/her efforts to develop a marketing campaign or organize an event may become meaningless. It is advised to write down the goals you plan to achieve and back them up with quantitative indicators for better result picture showcase. (Rich, 2015)

The next phase is the development of an effective strategy. There are many ways to achieve this goal, but the best is the one that will allow event managers to work most efficiently with the least amount of cost. Thus, the manager will achieve two key indicators at once: efficiency and effectiveness. If a lot of money was spent on implementing the idea, and everything went perfectly, there is room for improvement and thinking about how he or she can save the next time. However, if one managed to reduce the budget to a minimum, but the event failed, this is a sign that the manager's professionalism is being seriously questioned. (Rich, 2015)

Later, the strategy is being split into a million details. A well-developed strategy without an effective creative plan that helps bring it to life leads to failure. That is why, even in the process of preparing for the event, it is important to think over every detail of the plan. If at least one of the details does not fit into the concept of the general plan, there is a need to immediately eliminate the mistake until it becomes fatal for the entire event. (Rich, 2015)

Further, the event managers should consider organizational culture and the needs of the audience. To clarify the needs of the audience, the organizer can hold several focus groups, or, if this is not possible, simply imagine himself in the place of a potential audience: to understand what is driving them and what are their priorities. Additionally, it is important to provide the participants with a sense of one's uniqueness. Therefore, it is so important and valuable to give the viewer a sense of his/her own uniqueness and significance to make the experience unforgettable. (Belovieneis, Kinderis, Williamson, Ivanov & Ortin, n.d)

In addition, to make the event with great connectivity with the audience, an interactive design needs to be thought of. The interactivity should be the main highlight of the event, and the decor, musical accompaniment and snacks need to be a great addition to what is happening. (Belovieneis, Kinderis, Williamson, Ivanov & Ortin, n.d)

Likewise, the result must be measured, too. The result is not just the impression of the audience from the event, but some specific indicators that have been achieved, such as revenue for example. (Rich, 2015)

Lastly, Rich advises to show the result to all parties involved in organizing the event. It could be a presentation, the initial slides of which will be devoted to



specific numerical indicators, and in the end, it will recall that everything became real due to three things: clear tasks and goals, an effective strategy, and a clear creative plan that helped to realize the plan. This presentation could be also an added value in the foundation for further cooperation with partners. (Rich, 2015)

## 2.7 Stakeholders in the event industry

Following Dowson and Basset's three fundamentals of the event industry, the stakeholders can be described as the event organizer, clients, and suppliers. Event suppliers are in charge of executing the designed event milestones and services on the professional level to provide successful and gradual performance throughout the whole processing of the event. The scale of the event directly correlates with its requirements – the more processes planned the more specialists must be involved and more resources spent in order to reach the goals. Moreover, the technical level of personnel and quality of proposed goods must follow the requirements of the occasion's scope. As an example - proper sounding or lighting technicians are setting the equipment straight according to the situation and reacting to what is happening if needed. (Dowson & Basset, 2018)

Figure 3 defines and represents the correspondence between fundamental stakeholders of the event organization. Event organizer, as the central part, provides the execution of tasks and goals, follows the requirements defined by the client and agrees all the procurement, delivery and execution from the suppliers' side. Being the intermediate part between client and supplier, the event manager is the one who is able to fulfill the customer's wishes with the most relevant supplier's abilities. The event suppliers (as the stakeholder), are able to suggest and offer the possibilities, which will follow the client's criteria. (Dowson & Basset, 2018)

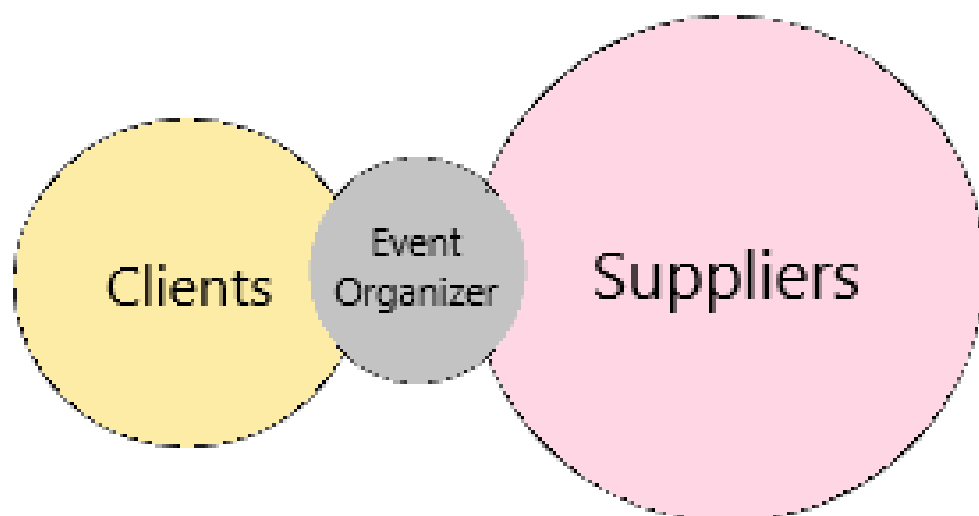


Figure 3. Key players in the event industry. (Dowson & Basset, 2018, p.11)

Another way to distinguish the event's main stakeholders was presented by Meegan Jones. According to Jones (2018, p.45), "stakeholders are any individuals or organizations that have an interest in your activities, have needs or expectations around your activities, or who may be affected positively or negatively by your activities". Both individuals or organizations may perform as stakeholders, having some specific interest in the event planning activities and implementing their solutions. Examples of stakeholders are listed as follows:

- Event Manager – event owner, event management company, partners, sponsors, or investors.
- Employees and Workforce – including volunteers, contracted personnel, and staff supplied by contractors or workforce hire firms.
- Supply Chain – location, service/product, and its suppliers. This could also include emergency services, fire, ambulance, safety, and security brigades.
- Participants – speakers, performers, exhibitors, contestants, sellers.
- Attendees – visitors, participants, audience, group delegates.
- Regulatory Bodies – local authority or municipality, licensing authorities, police, state or federal government and their departments.
- Community – local community and neighborhood, media. (Jones, 2018)

In addition to determining who is critical to the success of an event, it is imperative to create and apply effective ways to attract stakeholders. Usually, the main way of communication is through a phone call, emails or personal meetings. (Jones, 2018)

The result is highly dependent on the experience of the event organization team, its' ability to implement the skills to engage stakeholders and share up to date information with them according to the deadlines; agility and high-speed reaction on the changeable situation, and motivation and inspiration to provide the best cooperation with the stakeholders. The team's professionalism and enthusiastic attitude are as crucial as the actually shared information. (Jones, 2018)

## 2.8 Event Marketing

Event marketing has stood out in an independent industry only in the last 30 years, which coincided with an annual increase in the number of marketing activities. Event marketing was used by Coca-Cola, Nike, Nestle. One of the first companies that resorted to event marketing was McDonald's, which linked the image of the fast-food chain to the Ronald McDonald children's home and regularly holds special events using the image of the clown Ronald. Such event marketing tactics helped the company not only to attract a family audience, that is, children and their parents but also to create a positive, vivid, memorable image. (Holzbaur, Jettinger, Knauss, Moser & Zeller, 2005)

Based on the defined goal, established type and name of the event, an event becomes a product. Now for this product event organizer needs to choose marketing tools. Nigel Jackson (2013) claims that marketing includes all measures that help identify the needs of potential customers in the market, as well as all the tools necessary to meet these needs. Simply put, marketing brings the right sought-after event product to consumers. (Jackson, 2013)

The main aim of marketing is to provide the following things:

- product policy (including program, service)
- price policy (including setting prices for entrance tickets, determining the cost of food and drinks)
- distribution policy (including coupon system, visitor logistics)
- communication policy (including invitations, posters). (Jackson, 2013)

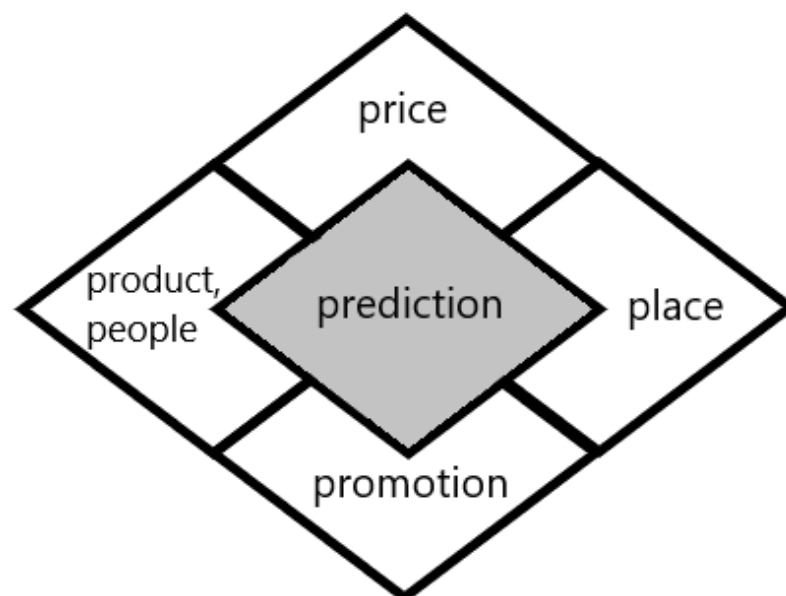


Figure 4. Marketing Mix (Holzbaur, Jettinger, Knauss, Moser & Zeller, 2005)

Figure 4 shows the classic 4Ps marketing mix with product design components ("Product" is transferred from the service sector "to the people"), conclusion of contracts ("Price", contract terms), distribution ("Place", and sales channels) and communication ("Promotion", advertising, information and image) with the fifth "p" - "Prediction" (forecasting tools) - are complemented by market analysis. (Holzbaur, Jettinger, Knauss, Moser & Zeller, 2005)

The event is ultimately a service. The marketing mix in the service sector is different from the mix in the production of capital goods and consumer goods. Marketing for the service sector - especially for events - means that an intangible "long-playing" product that exists in a wide variety of conceivable manifestations should be clarified and advertised. The event product presents a much broader interpretation of the content or characteristics of the product.

The event's marketing mix is designed to highlight it against the backdrop of competitive events and provide differentiation in quality, service and additional benefits. (Jackson, 2013)

The event manager has to decide whether to advertise the event and how best to do it. Should an event be declared, it depends on its type and size. The reason why the event may fail is that the public has no idea that it fails. Therefore, sharing the information about the location, time and event's idea with the target audience is essential. Newspapers and magazines, posts in social media, radio adverts, flyers and posters in public transport, billboards, emailing – these are examples of where the marketing could take place to advertise the event. Consequently, in order to reach the target audience, the event manager must choose the right advertising form from the variety mentioned above. Advertising in the right place, at the right timing, with the right advertising, at the right pricing is the most important rule and task. (Conway, 2009)

An appropriate marketing plan shares the location, time and date, entrance costs, agenda of the day, and outfit requirements to the target audience. The marketing plan's primary goal is to advertise the event's aim and attract the needed audience. Therefore, the following sections should be in the marketing plan before starting the actual advertisement: event executive summary, event description and its objectives, target audience summary, and the actual marketing strategy that will be used. (Capell, 2013)

The target audience should be decided first when starting the development of the marketing plan. In order to understand the opinions of the target audience, it is necessary to study the current market in order to recognize who might be potential participants, why they will want to come to this particular event, and also to find out if other events-competitors will be at the same time. (Capell, 2013)

### 2.8.1 Target Audience

The first factor is to define the target audience of the planned event since exactly according to the audience the final objectives of the event will be created, and the event milestones will be designed. The target audience determination has an influence on everything: objectives and goals of the event, theme and decorations, corporate culture, venue choice, and the whole event plan. Based on the statistical analyses, gained from previous activities as an example, the event coordinator needs to design the plan according to the guests. Such information as a list of guests or records from other events is highly valuable for the manager's research, so the quality of the events can be improved. (Mikolaitis & O'Toole, 2002)

Despite whom exactly the event is done for, it must be well planned and executed. A variety of customers may be the reason for totally different customer interests, which means, that planning and organizing methods are needed, meanwhile the quality must stay on a high level. That is the reason why

the manager and his team must be flexible enough to follow the needs of the project. All the details, as the client's wishes, audience and details about it, age, interests, professional occupation, influence the event needs and the successful performance. A nice way for an event manager to understand what an audience wants is to put himself in their place and think about what one would want to see on the occasion. Knowing and fulfilling all that visitors' expectations is one of the main criteria for success. In usual cases, all the contact information of potential visitors is stored in the event organization company database. According to this information, the target audience could be easily informed about upcoming events. (Mikolaitis & O'Toole, 2002)

### 2.8.2 Promotion of the event

It is essential to consider which advertising channels will be used to inform the potential audience about the event. Based on this, the next step is the development of the advertising ideas that will be implemented. For different advertising channels, ideas can be different but consolidated with something in common: theme, style, etc. It is important to use a single corporate style in the design of the event. Since the event provides an opportunity to directly contact the audience, it is necessary to consider how to use this situation to the maximum benefit for the company. In particular, the venue of the event should be designed by using the elements of the corporate identity of the organization and sponsoring companies. Obviously, the event should be advertised so that it fulfills the tasks set by the organizers. The goals of advertising can be very different, but one of the most obvious and universal is to gather an audience of participants in the event. Depending on the budget plan, the means and types of advertising can be chosen.

The event marketing message is generally an explanation of the occasion so that the audience could understand what it is about and explain the reasons to attend. It is good to start the marketing message with the event explanation, the program description, informing performers, speakers, and entertainment, the practicalities information (map of the venue, schedule, food court), information about the prices of the tickets. After a clear understanding and description of the event in the marketing message, the event manager needs to think about why guests would like to join it. A unique experience, the famous speakers or performers, the best networking, the special environment or extraordinary venue would be the great reasons to visit the event. (Capell, 2013)

After the marketing message has been finalized, the following step is to consider the advertising strategy. In general, there are three media types: paid, owned, and earned. Owned media is any communication channel or platform (organization's website, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Facebook) owned by the brand itself. Companies independently create and fully control them. The audience of their own media is all the old, new and potential customers of the brand. The quality and relevance of owned media content determine the convertibility into customers of those visitors who were attracted using paid tools and platforms. The company's own media resources are indispensable in

building long-term relationships with the target audience. They are cost-effective, versatile and can be maintained for an infinitely long time. (Capell, 2013)

Earned media means the whole set of user actions regarding the brand: discussing its image, content, and products on a variety of websites on the Internet, as well as likes, shares, and comments on the company's website and on its pages on social networks. In fact, this is a powerful public brand advertisement generated by the audience of an event. And this audience consists mainly of those users who are currently targeted by the company's advertisement, as well as fans of the brand and those people who were previously attracted through paid and organic online marketing channels. Earned media resources are the most convincing, authoritative and valuable type of digital marketing resources, which form a reliable, transparent and long-recognizable brand image on the Internet and in the minds of the target audience. (Capell, 2013)

Paid media refers to the entire list of paid tools and platforms for attracting traffic to a website and other company resources. This channel allows to expand the reach of digital campaigns and increase brand awareness. Accordingly, the paid media audience is users of the World Wide Web who have not heard of the company before but are potentially interested in its products or services. (Capell, 2013)

The name of the event should sound tempting enough and initially motivate all participants. Very often people read only the headline, only the capital letters of the ad or flyer. The title is best remembered, so it is important to put a catchy name for the event. If it is of interest, the rest of the text will be read. If not, no matter how brilliantly the advertising text was compiled, it may not be read and remembered. The description that comes after the heading can only confirm or cool down the interest that arose after reading the name of the event. It is important that the name already carries the necessary information about what kind of event it will be. (Capell, 2013)

It is necessary to use channels in social networks when advertising an event; therefore, it is recommended to place links to the websites of all social networks of the organization. Also, traditional marketing should not be forgotten, for example, websites and email marketing. The use of social media marketing is gaining popularity, as social networks have become an integral part of the life of every person. Since people regularly use social networks, this platform has become an inexpensive way to advertise any events on the Internet. LinkedIn has been regarded as one of the most suitable ways for advertising for a business audience, while Facebook is more targeted for consumers. Youtube, Instagram, and Twitter are now suitable for both business and consumer audiences. (Capell, 2013)

With the use of Instagram or Facebook pre-event marketing campaign could be done to attract visitors. Instagram is a social network where the emphasis is on

visual content: photos, images, and short videos. Millions of people visit the resource daily. Instagram is used to promote brands, products, personalities, and events. On Instagram, users are actively using hashtags. A hashtag is a word or phrase with a pound sign (#) at the beginning. They are used to highlight the main message thoughts. Hashtags make publications visible to other users who are interested in a particular topic. Therefore, it is important to come up with their own separate hashtag for the event, that way people can follow all the posts about the upcoming event. The name of this hashtag could be also included in the presentation or handouts so that event participants add it to their posts on social media. Facebook, on the other hand, is also suitable for sharing the event preparation status updates with the target audience, as well as for making the announcement of the confirmed speakers and performers. The posts sharing should be done regularly in order to attract more people. Creating an event page on Facebook could be helpful as it constantly reminds the participants about it. Furthermore, Facebook could be a valuable method to have communication with the potential visitors in advance, during the event, and consequently, after it. Moreover, it is a great source to share a bunch of photos after the event has been processed, which could make a positive impact on future events and creating loyalty with participants. (Capell, 2013)

LinkedIn is the largest worldwide social network for professionals. It can and should be used in advertising event-campaigns, if the event has a specific focus on any industry, topic, people of certain positions, etc. LinkedIn is considered to be more narrowly targeted and difficult to promote platform. However, with the right approach, the results of its use can exceed modest expectations. In the process of organizing events, it is possible to find and attract the necessary number of professionals in any field. It is recommended that guests who have attended the event are asked to post something about it on their LinkedIn pages to increase awareness among their contacts. (Capell, 2013)

Marketing through emails is another nice way to get the awareness of the event. Email newsletters serve one purpose in event marketing: information sharing. An email can tell about the upcoming event, and then about its results. If the planned event is a large one, it would be more useful to create a series of newsletters. Information in the first email, in general, should be about the event itself, in the following describe interesting highlights, and in the last, remind about the registration closing. The event manager could influence the target audience to join and promote the occasion with the help of email marketing. Usually, an email is a rather short private text to the end-customer, however, these days it is real to send the same one email to the many different recipients at once. (Jackson, 2013)

Getting an earned media could increase the chances of event promotion and this could be done through a competent social media campaign. It is necessary that in social media the content of an event creates a connection and reaction with the audience. In order to handle the corporate event on the proper level, the usage of social media channels, email marketing, and website hosting would increase the awareness of the event. Following the rules of competitive

marketing methods could lead to successful event creation and its performance. (Capell, 2013)

### 2.8.3 Post-event actions

Newsletter after the event is another way to keep the public on the info line. What is important in post-event marketing is that it should be useful to subscribers, even if they were not at the event. It can be an informational message with photos, training presentations or just interesting materials from the event, discounts. Asking for feedback will serve an event manager with important material for analysis, which can be also posted on the organization's website later.

A useful way to finalize event organization is to do several post-event marketing actions, preferably in two weeks after it. The stage of the after-event includes: saying "thank you" the organization group and volunteers involved, gathering the feedback from the visitor and evaluating it straight away, spreading out digital material (documents, presentations), sending presents to the partners, and responding to any questions that are still pending. (Hoyle, 2002)

In order to assess the success of marketing and the event itself, it is necessary to collect feedback from the visitors immediately after the occasion. Determined beforehand a marketing plan and goals should be compared to the actual outcome. The future event organization development can be also influenced by a sequential follow-up of the stakeholders. The measurements of the utilized resources, new valuable opinions, and information, and recommendations – these are the important outcomes from the follow-up. (Hoyle, 2002)

According to Jackson (2013), another final stage of the event is writing down the final financial report. After the event, it often turns out that somewhere it was overpaid, and somewhere, on the contrary, was saved. In any case, the final figures differ from the preliminary ones, and only after the event, it is possible to prepare an accurate financial report. It is advisable to do this as quickly as possible. When the event has passed and there are no more external incentives to rush, there will be a temptation to leave everything as it is and return to the report after a while. And this is very risky since it is unlikely that the manager will have so much free time. The completion of all financial affairs should not be postponed. It is important to pay as quickly as possible to all suppliers and even faster to collect money from debtors. (Jackson, 2013)

## 2.9 Event Production

The event production is a sophisticated activity, and a lot of the factors influence the result. Such details as well-trained and coordinated crew, an endorsement from government, accessibility and convenience for the involved team, and guests, human and technical facilities, security assurance and safety checks, all



of them are highly valuable for the successful performance. Figure 5 represents the infrastructure map, where the essential factors with required attention are shown. (Silvers, 2012)



Figure 5. Overview of Event Infrastructure (Silvers, 2012)

Planning of the event needs is the largest period out of the event's lifecycle, up to 75%, while the post-event activities consume 15%, and the event by itself uses only 15% out of all designed plan. The event by itself is a project, due to the requirements and needs, which vary from one event to another. Client needs, time limits, budget, overall expectations, and milestones - all these factors form the specific environment for each new occasion. (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnell, 2012, p.154)

As a base for the thesis, the author has used knowledge from several sources about event planning. Kilkenny (2006), Dowson and Basset (2015) and O'Toole & Mikolaitis (2002), used the similar points to explain the basic way of organizing and supporting the event, even though the origins of the occasions may absolutely differ. That analogical information is necessary for the event processing to reach the main milestones of any event.

Kilkenny (2006) proposed a five W frame of the event structure. The event manager must be able to answer those requests before starting any planning. The processing is as follows:

- Why,
- What,
- When,
- Where,
- Who. (Kilkenny, 2006)

Each answered component of that simplified model provides the possibility to determine the needs of the project and clarifies the goal of the event.

Dowson and Basset (2015) proposed a three-phase schema for planning an event: preparation, planning and post event (Figure 6). The first step is **preparation** (later also **planning** and **post event**), during which the event manager needs to identify the details about the event, such as the concept of the occasion, financial support, involving the stakeholders, feasibility of the execution processes, partnership or investment offers.

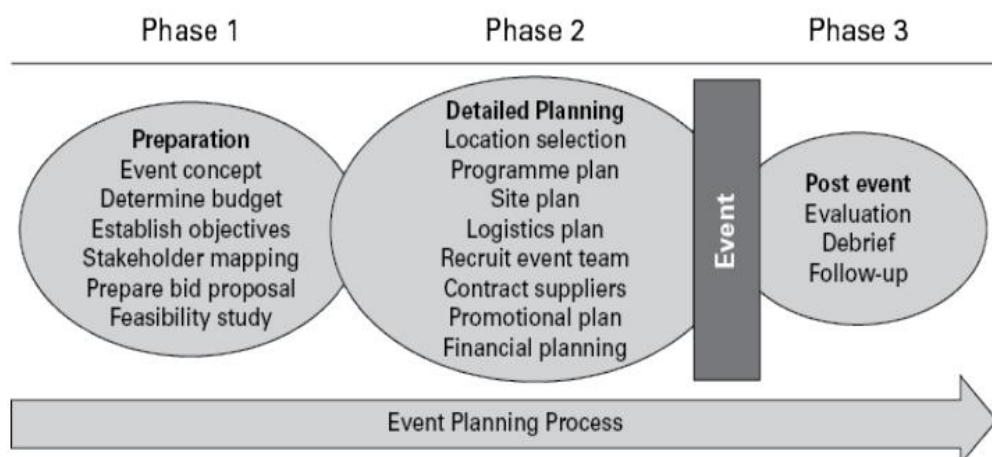


Figure 6. Event Planning Process. (Dowson & Basset, 2015)

According to the Dowson and Basset, that step will provide clarification of the concept, due to the fact that some of the elements could not be needed in some cases. The next step is a detailed **planning**, the main ideas of which are: selecting the location for the future event, planning of the activities during the event, venue preparation, involving the event crew, creating the contracts with the suppliers, promotional strategy creation, financial plan development, provision planning. (Dowson & Basset, 2015)

The last phase is the **post-event** activities. During that step, event organizers evaluate and esteem their actions and the results. Dowson and Basset accentuate the relevance of the actions' assessment, since analyzing the results can provide the necessary information about what was successful and what was

not. That analyze is valuable information for the future organization of activities. (Dowson & Basset, 2015)

The designed steps of the event planning could provide the proper level of efficiency of the conceived activities and increase the chances for the occasional success. Chances of success depend on the quality and amount of planning actions, as well as punctual adaptation to the changing environment and controlling the situation. (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnell, 2012, p. 261-263).

## 2.10 Risk management

The potential problems, which can happen before, during or after the event, must be defined during the preparation phase, as well as the options to solve the issues that also need to be created. Steps can be called identification, assessing, planning and reviewing. Identification of risks is the first to be done. The possible problems can be rather inner or external, and while inner risks are more predictable, external issues are harder to be prepared to, since anything can become the problem, examples are fire, flood or even political issues. Inner risks are something that can happen during ordinary activities such as lack of beverages or technical malfunctioning. However, despite the amount, complexity or easiness, all the possible risks must be listed down, and the ways to solve the problems need to be created to ensure the success of the event. (Capell, 2013)

The best possible scenario is the event where there is no need to use any of the designed problem solutions, but in order to be prepared for any situation, the event organizers must assess the possible risks. In case if any of the possible problems become real, the speed of the reaction matters so the organization during issue solving is the valuable thing. The development of the solution options will at least make the resolving easier and decrease the possible loss, if not prevent the failure. A low number of guests may lead to unnecessary beverages and food, a low amount of seat places may lead people to stand and lose interest in the event's actions; these kinds of risks are inner risks and therefore more predictable. (Capell, 2013)

Reviewing the risk list is the action that helps keeping abreast and control, add or erase the possible troubles from the problem list. The closer is the event the higher is the essentiality of modifying the risk list. A good example is an event during the autumn or spring when the risk of getting flu is higher and the original organization team might be ill, so the extra personnel is required. Updating the information and controlling the situation may decrease the effect which may be caused by the problems. (Capell, 2013)

## 2.11 Evaluation of the event

After the event, the most important action is to gather the statistics so that the event information can be gathered and analyzed afterward. Such data is extremely necessary for the development of future events. One of the most valuable abilities of the event manager is the skill to understand the information from the event, such as customer interests and expectations. By considering it, the quality, popularity, and therefore profitability could be increased. Processing the information from feedbacks, opinions, and lessons learned can improve and clarify the work of the organizational team, and therefore lead to better solutions and decisions in the future.

One option to measure the success of the event is to define whether the milestones were reached, overdone or not achieved. From that analysis, the quality of the job done can be evaluated and consequently, the validation and calculation of expenses may be more precise. By defining the unprofitable or low-quality parts, the organizer can decide whether those issues need to be improved, changed or not used at all, so the budget usage would be clearer and more justified in the future. The analysis of the event is called the success research and there are several methods of the definition of that research. It can be either qualitative or quantitative. (Friedmann, 2003)

Quantitative research represents the statistical data based on numerical data, and the quality of that research depends on the number of guests, who have shared their opinion about the event. Statistical power is based on the numbers, that is why the more opinions are gathered the higher accuracy rate about the event will be received. The responsiveness of that research is based on the number of persons. (Friedmann, 2003)

A qualitative method is performed by getting opinions from the guests about the quality of the event. By proposing the grades for several points or receiving the opinions and suggestions, the necessary data can be gathered. However, due to the amount of that possible data, the processing of that information may take a long time, since it directly depends on the depth of the answer. The quality of the responses allows an organization to understand what exactly may be performed in a better way and apply the proper recommendations to keep the interest of the public. (Friedmann, 2003)

There are several ways to perform success researches. Some of them can be done right during the event, by asking the opinion of the guests, which will give a fast response to the ongoing activities. They also can be done after the event, such as an internet questionnaire or telephone calls. Even though most of the guests will ignore the quiz, some will answer, and the responses may help to fulfill the research. One of the important facts is to define what kind of questionnaire type is more valuable for the designed event, since the resources which can be spent to gather the information via the phone calls and the processing of that data may exceed the estimated budget and time designed for it. (Capell, 2013)

The data-gathering questions may contain questions about quality or rather be quantity based. The types of questions can be called as open-ended or closed-ended. The closed-ended option consists of some predesigned answers and giving only several possible answers to the respondent. That kind of questionnaire is much easier to evaluate. (Friedmann, 2003)

The questionnaire is a cost-effective method for gathering data, such as opinions, preferences, satisfaction of guests, specific opinions and suggestions. That tool provides the possibility of conducting the review verbally or in written form, or through the website. All those actions can help the event organizers to understand the needs of people and therefore the needs of the event. By developing that knowledge event manager is able to create the occasion which corresponds to the needs of the guest side. (Silvers, 2012)

The questionnaires should be based on unprejudiced and properly structured questions, so the answers could provide clear and meaningful information about the event. The simplicity of the questions is an important fact, as well as the anonymity of the person who answered. The structure of the questionnaire depends on the phrases used to describe the question. Formatting, sequencing, and deliberation of the questionnaire materials directly correlate with the productivity of the evaluation and analyzing of the answers. According to the types of the quiz, the proper rules must be applied. Close-ended questions must contain valid, essential and logical points, be properly categorized and provide the applicable result. Open-ended methods should not consist of any special conviction and support the free-minded opinion, encourage the people to give their honest thoughts with no prejudice. The order of the questions is as well significant, starting from simple questions and listing the more essential closer to the end of the quiz to ensure the number of responses. (Silvers, 2012)

## **2.12 Summary of the theoretical framework**

To sum up the theoretical part, it was discussed when the first evidence of event management has been historically recorded. Then, the author defined the key concepts in the event industry and explained what types of events exist nowadays. Later, an action plan, event objectives, and planning processes of event organization were deeply studied and presented in this thesis. The author also broadly discussed why marketing is essential for the event management industry and concluded with the explanation of the ways how an event could be evaluated after all. The theory study and literature review lead us to the conclusion and the answer to the research question: "How a successful event for Company X can be organized and executed in changing environment". In order to plan, manage, successfully produce and then evaluated an event for Company X, it is essential to start with careful planning of every major and minor detail. It also requires excellent communication with other departments in the company as well as with the management team. Last but not least, the event manager always has to remember the event objectives and mission why all this event planning was started. That attitude will help to keep up the

productiveness and positive mood. In the next chapters, the reader will get to know how that strategy was implemented into the planning and executing processes for the Idea Development Week event for Company X.

### **3 ORGANIZING AN EVENT IN CASE COMPANY X**

The following part of the thesis consists of a detailed plan for Case Company's X event, data collection, and analysis made by using qualitative and quantitative research methods and providing recommendations for future events in Company X.

Company X is a non-profit organization, whose all events and activities are co-created with partner and sister organizations, startup ecosystem players, and volunteers. With the help of this support and involvement, every event and workshop are free of charge for everyone. The organization creates and hosts specialized training hands-on programs collaborating with the startup ecosystem and other industry leaders and experts with the aim to fill in the talent and knowledge gap in the tech sector.

The organization regularly holds different kinds of workshops, talks, educational programs, events since the opening in 2016. Tech, design, entrepreneurship, and business is the base for all the activities happening at Company X. By participating in these activities, personal development increases chances for finding the job, or a business idea scaling could be achieved.

The Idea Development Week event is a five-days free of charge practical event, which is open for everybody who has already had a business idea or willing to take part and contribute to developing an idea into a real business. Throughout the week participants take part in various workshops on business model development in order to help to turn the idea into an actual project. This event is created specifically for the people who had dreamt of having own business, but also for the ones wishing to contribute with their skillset in a project they are curious about.

The IDW is a seasonally recurring event, which already happened once around a half a year before this one. Last time the event was scheduled to last for two days, whereas this time the thesis author together with the company's management team decided to prolong it to a five-day long event.

The thesis author, being an intern for Company X, was the main event coordinator for this project. Her responsibilities were to thoroughly plan the event, coordinate and delegate tasks to other departments in the company like Marketing (in order the event to be well promoted), IT team (to ensure tech setup), Operations (to make the venue logistics), and Community team (to take care of catering). Then, the major task was to make the event successfully happened and after all to do the evaluation.

### 3.1 Event Action Plan

As was mentioned beforehand in the theoretical part, any event organization must start with a carefully designed plan for every activity and stakeholder's involvement. This planning structure was applied to the Company's X Idea Development Week event.

The first step was to choose the dates and timing for the event. It was scheduled for dates 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> March 2019 and 16:00-19:00 time-wised. The main idea behind this particular timing was to make an event suitable and accessible not only for those who are currently unemployed but also for those who are busy during office working hours. Later, it appeared that the chosen starting time of 16:00 was still too early for those who work, and it has been taken into consideration for the future events in Company X.

For the second milestone, the program plan for five days had to be designed. As Idea Development Week event had already happened once beforehand, the planning ideas were firstly gathered from the old action plan. The previous agenda was evaluated based on the feedback received from participants and organizers, then also new ideas and insights were gathered. After careful consideration, the agenda shown in Table 1 was finalized and approved together with managers and the event manager.

As could be seen from Table 1, the column after the program column is named "Assignee", meaning that every activity on the agenda should have a responsible person to ensure that everything goes right and smoothly. For this event mainly Company X representatives and guests themselves were involved most of the time in the program. Apart from already mentioned responsible persons, the guest speakers played a crucial part in the event, as they were the ones teaching the participants how to develop their business ideas.

Table 1 shows the IDW Action Plan the representation of more descriptive information on what is happening at what time was. This plan gives external people or other department representatives' clearer picture of what will happen on the actual event days.

Table 1. Idea Development Week Action Plan

Idea Development Week			
<b>Day 1 (11 March 2019) Monday</b>			
Time	Program	Assignee	What
16:00-16:10	The Shortcut Introduction	Company X representative	Company X Introduction
16:10-16:15	Event Introduction	Company X representative	IDW intro
16:15-16:40	Inspirational Talk	Guest company representative	Guest company introduction and talk
16:40-17:00	Coffee break		Coffee break
17:00-17:15	Ideas pitching	Participants	Ideas pitching, 5 min each
17:15-18:30	Voting and team building	Participants	Voting on ideas, break up into teams
18:30-18:45	Communication and discussion	Participants	Discussion in groups
18:45-19:00	Next day info	Company X representative	Business Model Canvas intro, next day info
<b>2nd Day (12 March 2019) Tuesday</b>			
Time	Program	Assignee	What
16:00-16:10	Day intro	Company X representative	Day introduction
16:10-16:40	Lean Business Canvas workshop cont.	Workshop speaker	1st and 2nd columns of Business Canvas explanation
16:40-17:20	Teamwork	Participants	Working on 1st and 2nd column
17:20-17:35	Break		Coffee break
17:35-18:20	Lean Business Canvas workshop cont.	Workshop speaker	Explanation
18:20-18:55	Teamwork	Participants	Working on 2nd ,3rd and 5th columns of Business Canvas
18:55-19:00	Next day info	Company X representative	Q&A session
<b>3rd day (13 March 2019) Wednesday</b>			
Time	Program	Assignee	What
16:00-16:30	Q & A session on canvas	Company X representative	Day introduction, Q&A
16:30-17:00	Group work	Participants	Team work on Business Canvas
17:00-17:15	Coffee Break		Coffee break
17:15-18:00	Group work	Participants	Team work on Business Canvas
18:00-18:45	Winning Mentality Workshop	Workshop speaker	Workshop
18:45-19:00	Next day info	Company X representative	Next day information
<b>4rth day (14 March 2019) Thursday</b>			
Time	Program	Assignee	What
16:00-16:15	Intro to the day	Company X representative	Day introduction, Q&A
16:15-17:00	Pitching Workshop	Workshop speaker	Icebreaking games, pitching workshop
17:00-17:15	Coffee break		Coffee break
17:15-17:45	Presentation slides preparation	Participants	Slides preps for final pitch
17:45-18:45	Rehearsal	Participants	Each team (10min): 3min pitch + 7min feedback
18:45-19:00	Presentation submission	Participants	Next day information
<b>5th day (15 march 2019) Friday</b>			
Time	Program	Assignee	What
16:00-16:10	Intro to the day	Company X representative	Day introduction, Q&A
16:10-16:55	Workshop	Workshop speaker	International Expansion Workshop
16:45-17:00	Preparation to the final pitch	Participants	Participants get rady for final pitch
17:00-17:15	Jury introduction	Jury	Jury introduction
17:15-18:30	Pitching to the Jury	Participants	Pitching to the Jury Each team (7min): 3min pitch + 3min Q&A
18:30-18:40	Selection criteria explanation		Jury choose the winners
18:40-19:00	Announcing the winner + Closing words	Company X representative	Winners announcement

## 3.2 Planning Stage

In this subchapter, the planning stage and all involved activities are described to give the reader a better overview of how the IDW event in Company X was carried out from the beginning to the end.

### 3.2.1 Event objective

Company X's main mission is to help enthusiastic people to fill in their knowledge gaps for better further talent acquisition, especially in the startup ecosystem. Therefore, the core idea under IDW event was to gather individuals



with an entrepreneurship mindset and help them to develop their already existing ideas or inspire them to come up with any new idea, or just to involve interested people into the business idea development processes. Key Speakers from different startup leading companies were invited to share their success stories and knowledge with the participants of the program. That way visitors acquired knowledge and learned the real path of establishing a new company and the ways to make it successful in the long run. Another important aspect was to have coaches assisting teams and helping them in the idea development journey during the event week. By coaches, it is meant the business development advisors and industry specialists.

### 3.2.2 Target audience

Idea Development Week event was open to anybody who has ever dreamt to start his own business but was hesitant and unconfident where to start. Another target audience is people with an entrepreneurial mindset who are willing to contribute to the potential business project, interested and believe in it.

The targeted people are the ones who have the ideas to create or develop, and the people who know how to create things and to provide the necessary resources. The focus was on such persons, who wish to do their own business, bring their ideas to life, feel important by working not in the already created and big corporations, but in smaller startup companies, where the employee with the specific knowledge is more essential and irreplaceable. Some of those visitors had the dreams from the very childhood, some have found out the specific way to create things which could fill in niches of business.

### 3.2.3 Venue

The question for choosing a venue, fortunately, was an easy one for carrying out the IDW. Company X regularly runs different kinds of events on its office premises. The location is easily accessible in Helsinki City Center, which makes any event very convenient for visitors. Implicitly the office venue was chosen to be a place for Idea Development Week. It has two spacious rooms for the events, 6 smaller meeting rooms, own kitchen, and several bathrooms. The idea behind this choice was not only because the space of the company's office could accommodate and is out of extra charge, but also because the office interior design is fully accompanied with event business theme and atmosphere. It was planned that the participants would sit in group style sitting, meaning one table and several chairs around it, which would make the group work processes easier. What is more, the venue also has all the technical equipment needed, for example, screens and projectors, spare laptops for showing presentations and other materials, necessary cables, etc. All in all, it was very beneficial to run the event on the office site as everything is well-known and easily accessible.

### 3.2.4 Program

The program was planned so that every day the event would start at 16:00 (Appendix 1). The agenda for Day 1 (Monday) was to start event Company X introduction and continuing with Idea Development Week event introduction and explanation. Then, the guest company speaker was invited to the stage to share her own successful startup life experience and inspire participants for a productive week and work. Later, the coffee break and the opportunity for mingling took place for 20 minutes. After a break, the people with already existing business ideas came to the stage to present and pitch them to the rest of the participants. Consequently, the natural team division happened, the ones who wanted to stick to just pitched ideas created one small group, and the others grouped together and came up with new ideas. Uninteresting ideas dropped out of the game naturally as well. That way initially there were 11 business ideas pitched and out of those only nine teams were grouped. The teams had enough time to get to know each other, discuss the project plan and any other related topics. The Day1 wrap-up consisted of the introduction of the following day's agenda.

Day 2 (Tuesday) started with the introduction of that day and followed with the workshop on Lean Business Canvas. Lean Business Canvas is one of the strategic management tools for describing business models of new and existing enterprises. As it could be seen from Figure 8 below, it is a one-page diagram describing all the company's business processes: problem-solving, customers, idea, implementation, and finances.

PROBLEM SPACE	CUSTOMERS	IDEA	IMPLEMENTATION	FINANCES
PERCEPTION	PERSONAS	IDEA AS A SOLUTION TO A PROBLEM	CHANNELS	COSTS
ROOTS AND SYMPTOMS		VALUE PROPOSITION	ACTIVITIES	
	MARKET SEGMENTATION			REVENUES
QUICK FIX SOLUTIONS		COMPETITION	RESOURCES PARTNERS	

Figure 7. Lean Business Canvas

The workshop speaker firstly explained only two columns of the Lean Business Canvas, then gave time for having a short break and a discussion of these columns for the teams. After a while, the workshop continued, and the speaker explained the last three columns. The rest of the Day 2 participants had time to brainstorm and develop their ideas with the help of that business canvas.

The next Day 3 (Wednesday) started with the introduction of plans for the day and the possibility to ask any questions related to the Business Canvas workshop. The timeline followed with the second workshop about Trick on Funding, explaining the possible variants on how to get funds for business development. The topic is essential and one of the most thrilling when starting to think about running the startup. After the break, teams had time for the group to work on their business ideas. The next activity was a workshop Winning Mentality that entrepreneurs should possess in order to be successful on the market.

Thursday, as a Day 4 (Thursday), kicked off with daily program and converted into the Pitching workshop which was one of the crucial ones in the IDW event. Participants had to learn how to present the business idea to any external party and make people interested and curious about their product. The host of the workshop was really experienced in how to present anything to an unknown audience, and consequently, IDW participants learned many important lessons out of this workshop. The rest of the day passed for getting ready for the final pitching presentations and the workshop speaker was helping around.

Final Day 5 (Friday) was the most exciting both for IDW staff members and participants, as it was the moment to show the results of the work that was done during the whole week. The day was also filled with the workshop about International Expansion, explaining the milestone to bring the business to another country. IDW event manager invited startup ecosystem key players representatives to judge the developed ideas. The main prize was free participation in Kiuas Accelerator programs on taking the business idea to the next level. According to the official website, Kiuas is “the leading startup accelerator in Finland that supports founders in taking their early-stage companies from idea to first revenue and funding”. (Kiuas, n.d.). Each team had five minutes for pitching and Q&A (questions and answers) session. After careful discussion and consideration, the jury made an announcement of their decision and the winner team was warmly welcomed on the stage for the prizes hand over.

Idea Development Week positively wrapped up with a small after-party on the Company X office premises, offering beers and cider to all participants, jury, speakers, coaches, and everyone involved in the event organization.

### 3.2.5 Keynote speakers

Company X has a relatively good CRM (Customer Relationship Management) system which has a comprehensive list of contacts who have already been

invited to speak up or help at any events run by Company X. That basically means those contacts could be potential guest speakers or coaches for the Idea Development Week event.

The event manager and the company's management team went through that list and picked several candidates for being workshop speakers. Later, the event manager started contacting the people and checking their availability. Eventually, it took around one month to finally come to the conclusion about keynote speakers. During these negotiations, some potential guests refused the offer, so the process was delayed and became more complicated for a while.

All in all, five people who are the professionals in their business sphere, agreed to come and talk at the event. It was scheduled so that one guest speaker would have his/her time to present separately each day. This means that having a five-day event and five speakers, participants were learning different materials from different presenters each day. As it was found out from the feedbacks later, the participants did like the professionalism and passionate attitude of the guest speakers, and that was a great sign for Company X.

The same strategy applied to jury selection. Three key C-level executives from the startup ecosystem were invited and fortunately agreed to judge the final teams' pitches straight away. The selected judges had a great experience in running and scaling up the business, therefore they could ready justify their decision and tell if the idea was well developed or not.

Another segment of guest people that were invited to the event not to present anything but to be helping hands for the participants was so called coaches. They are the ones who were moving around the teams and sharing their own thoughts in teams' business ideas development, helping out with Lean Business Canvas, with final pitch preparation, etc. Regarding this, there was a need to have 6-7 coaches for each team for the Days 2-5, and that was successfully managed and completed.

### 3.2.6 Budget

As the Company X is a non-profit organization, the budgeting keeps at the restrained condition for the sake of financial stability. Having enough space at the Company's X, the organization saves money by not paying additional money for the venue renting. Guest speakers also agree to come and talk on a volunteer basis meaning for free. Hence, the tickets for participants are also free of charge in order to promote the event for a larger number of people.

Table 2. Budget Plan

Item	Amount	Price
Coffee	15 units	€ 60.00
Chips	25 units	€ 60.00
Cookies	10 units	€ 30.00

Nuts	10 units	€	40.00
Milk	20 units	€	22.00
Sugar	1 unit	€	1.00
Tea	2 units	€	15.00
Fruits	50 bananas, 30 apple, 10 packages of grapes	€	50.00
Glue Sticks	5 units	€	20.00
Small sticky notes	10 units	€	50.00
		€	<b>348.00</b>

Table 2 above shows that the only expenses that the organization needs and could afford are up to 350 euros expenditure on the basic supplies and groceries. The event manager, at the same time the thesis author, managed to plan the decent catering for that week with only 280 euros and spent around 70 euros on office supplies that were needed for the group work.

This budget plan and its component was approved by the management team and procured in advance, except the fruits, those were bought daily during the week program in order to be fresh.

### 3.2.7 Invitation

When it comes to the invitations, in case of Company's X Idea Development Week event, only guest speakers, jury members, and coaches were needed to be invited through email. Firstly, personal invitations for potential keynote guests were sent out two months in advance to check out their availability. If needed the follow-ups were spread out in one and a half months before the event. After the email conversations, the final list of confirmed speakers was finalized a month prior.

The next step was to prepare the actual event and wait a bit until it is enough to close to the event to start reminding people about the date and time. Those reminders were sent out one week in advance for the first, then two days prior. Consequently, the show up was 100% for those invited people, meaning that everyone did come and participate in the Idea Development Week event.

## 3.3 Execution Stage

This subchapter describes how the Idea Development Week event was executed and implemented into real life from 11 to 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2019 at Company X.

### 3.3.1 Event team

The core event implementation team consists of the event manager – the thesis author at the same time, the management team which is approving or rejecting ideas, volunteers who help on the event's days with registration, cloakroom,

catering, and just overall event assistance; and Company's X Tech & Marketing teams that facilitate and ensure tech setup and social media presence respectively.

### 3.3.2 Volunteers

For the IDW event Company X gave a call for volunteers' involvement. As it is seen from Table 3, it was planned that nine people in total would be needed to help from the volunteering side. For the registration Company X needed two people, one person to stand outside at the entrance door and show the direction to the venue. To ensure smooth catering three people were involved. In addition, three other volunteers were in charge of overall event facilitation during those five days.

Table 3. Volunteer Plan

Volunteer Planning		
11-15th of March		
No of people	Tasks	Timing
3 people	2 for Registration & 1 for outside with banner	3pm to 8pm/ Day
3 people	Catering	3pm to 8pm/ Day
3 people	Overall assistance	5pm to 8pm/ Day
<b>Total 9</b>		

Company X appreciates volunteers' personal life and fully understands that it is impossible that the same volunteers contribute every day. Therefore, it was totally fine and align with the strategy to brief every day new volunteers. The volunteer application, selection, and briefing were done by the Community Team of Company X.

It was agreed in advance that volunteers come one hour before the start to help with last-minute preparations. After the event day finishes volunteers also need to stay later until everything is clean enough for the next day. During event hours every volunteer does his/her own responsibility; nevertheless, they could also participate and listen to the workshops upon their availability.

### 3.3.3 Catering

The catering is planned together with the event manager and Community Team of Company X. Every event day in the program there is about 15-20 minutes for the break. Water, coffee and tea, some snacks as chips, nuts, and cookies, fresh fruits such as bananas, apples and grapes were served to recharge participants' energy level with needed nutrients for better teamwork.

The catering table was placed conveniently in the middle of the space to ensure that waiting lines are not created and bothering the audience. Furthermore, it was discussed in advance if the lack of food and drinks happens, where to find

and prepare additional food. The volunteers were shown and taught where and how to make a coffee, find extra dishes and snacks.

#### 3.3.4 Event Marketing

All the marketing activities are done only by the Marketing Team of Company X. Obviously, Company X wants to involve as many people to their events as possible for better brand awareness as well as to give people opportunities to professionally change and improve their lives.

For this reason, the Marketing Team must promote and advertise the company itself and its events to invite more potential attendees and also to get new connections. The target audience for Company X events are people seeking possible job opportunities or the ones who are still hesitant to open the startups of their own. This target audience is both females and males from the university students' age to older persons. The aim is to have at least 40 participants taking part in the IDW event.

From Company X's history, it has been proved that Facebook is the best marketing channel to promote such events. As a result, an IDW themed Facebook group was created, filled with necessary contact brief information such as event explanation, date, time and location, and then the page was constantly updated with news related to the event information. The poster of IDW is shown in Appendix 2.

A few days in advance Marketing Team shared personal guest speaker's marketing posters with upcoming workshop descriptions in the Facebook group. When the actual event days occurred, the Facebook and Instagram pages were constantly updated with posts on how the IDW event is executed. This marketing activity helps to gain social media interaction with already existing and new potential corporate page followers. Which in turn shows followers that Company's X events are worth coming and participating at.

Idea Development Week Facebook group reached 148 interested potential participants; consequently, 35 people actually attended those five program days. This number is not the highest-ever participation rate, nevertheless still good enough.

#### 3.4 Coordination

During the actual event days, all the planned organizational activities must be controlled and revised in order to have a successful performance. The preparation must start beforehand, the planned supplies must be at the venue and the staff should be briefed about timing and according to the needs. Such possible issues as waiting queues or possible lack of food and drinks must be taken into consideration and the ways to solve those problems need to be discussed. Besides the catering facilities, the customer service must be double-

checked, the registration tables, cloakrooms, toilets - all the customer needs to be arranged.

The technical side also needs to be under control. The IT technicians need to provide the functional systems so the event organizers and registration staff can use the laptops with the properly set check-in system and all the involved tech devices such as TVs, sound equipment, lighting should be functional. Moreover, the created presentation and other media files need to be tested so any possible incompatibility can be solved before the event. It is also a good idea of IT specialists to explain what can be done if any of the possible issues happen.

The guest speakers must arrive in advance and have a trial of their presentations and speech, test the microphone and the sounding system so the technical specialists can adjust the setting to fulfill the needs.

## **4 EVALUATION RESEARCH**

To evaluate how successful was the Idea Development Week event at Company X the thesis author as event manager chose to use feedback questionnaires. The questionnaires were spread out on the very last day of the event and then collected immediately. With the help of feedback questionnaires, Company X could ascertain and measure the success of IDW and acknowledge a future development for the events in the organization. The given-out questionnaires were in a printed version, therefore, to ease the process of data analysis, all the paper forms were converted to digital form and transferred to Google Forms.

### **4.1 Feedback collection**

The printed feedback questionnaires (Appendix 3) were given out to 35 participants and collected on the last day of the event with the aim to evaluate how successful the IDW event really was. Eventually, only 20 people answered the questionnaire which is nearly 60% of the total participants' number. The feedback forms can provide Company X with enough descriptive data that could be used to identify visitors' needs and preferences. That way the organization could clearly see the needs for future improvement and do some changes to ensure success and guests' satisfaction of events in the future. The questionnaire is compiled of qualitative and quantitative questions, both open and close-ended.

The feedback questionnaire starts with close-ended scale questions questioning visitors to give a rate for various event aspects from 1 to 10, where 1 is lowest and 10 is the highest score. Then the form continued with the question of whether the event was aligned with a visitor's professional experience, and the one has a scale from 1 to 5, 1 being too basic and 5 too advanced, to choose from. After that, the form has several open-ended questions asking participants



for feedback on what they would want in the future programs and events, and how the Company X could improve. Those questions include asking which topics the visitor would want to hear next time. Then comes the last question about how valuable and interesting the workshops were, as well as about the benefit of the coaches' help during these five days. The feedback questionnaire is anonymous to ensure that every participant can speak up and express the opinion.

This feedback questionnaire form is rather standard for Company's X events; therefore, the event manager must ensure that the title has the event's name and correct dates in the header. The reason why it was decided to spread out the form physically but not electronically through email is that because people tend to forget answering those feedbacks after everything is over. That is why the event manager gave them out at the very last event's day and collected after everyone left some feedback and comments. Appendix 3 represents the actual questionnaire that was being asked to fulfill with any comments and suggestions.

## **4.2 Feedback analysis and results**

### **4.2.1 Quantitative analysis**

The quantitative data analysis was done after collecting a printed feedback questionnaire that contains close-ended questions and was displayed in appendix 3. The participants were asked to give an honest opinion anonymously about a five-day long Idea Development week event. The data from paper printed feedback forms were transferred to Google Form to make further analysis easier.

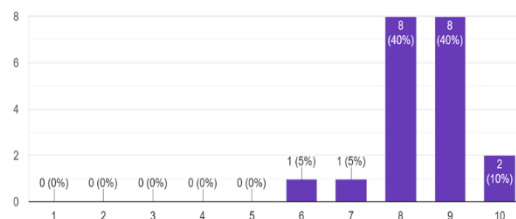
The figures 8-18 represent the quantitative data analysis, based on the data gathered from the printed feedback forms information. The questions were created using the 1 to 10 scale, where 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest. The analysis contains data from 20 responses, which represents 60% of the audience.

There are two major criteria to point out and discuss: one-half of the questions were about the overall quality of the event, while others were about the usefulness and quality of the presented information. From tables 9-19, it can be understood that the event by itself received better feedback than the teaching materials. However, according to figure 18, overall information was on the required level. The presenters were highly rated and have influenced the visitors' opinions pretty much. Methods and tools were good enough, while the relevance of the information and the content quality itself could be increased to fulfill the visitors' needs and wishes. One negative feedback point is about a strong necessity to revise the questionnaire structure itself since it appeared that the questions were not totally clear for the attendees. That is the reason why there is no standardized answers were received.

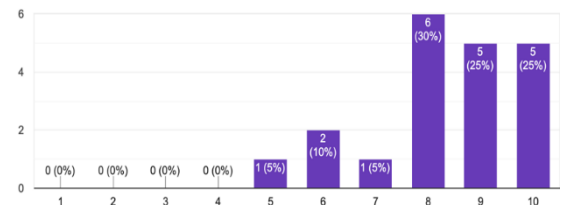
When looking at the feedback questions more precisely, the first four questions concerned (figures 8-11):

- Overall event opinion
- Content that was presented
- Methods and tools used
- Relevance and usefulness of the event to the career

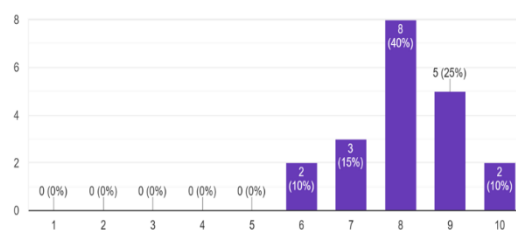
Overall  
20 responses



Content  
20 responses



Methods and Tools  
20 responses



Relevance/usefulness to your current/future career  
20 responses

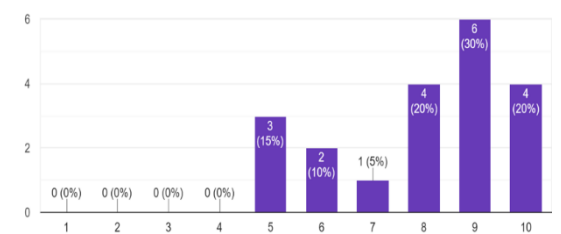


Figure 8. Overall event opinion

Figure 9. Content

Figure 10. Methods & Tools used

Figure 11. Relevance/usefulness to current/future career

Going more into the details, most of the audience rated the IDW event's overall outcome at 8 and 9 points out of 10, which is a great result for Company X. Opinions about the content diverged a little. Most of the people, 16 visitors, think that content level was on 8-10 points out of 10, whereas four people think the content level was below 7 points. The methods and tools used were warmly liked by the participants. However, from figure 11, it can be seen that the event was not relevant for the professional career of every participant, only 14 guests think that this event can somehow influence and improve their career and they rated the event from 8 to 10 points.

Next four questions (figures 12-15) relate to:

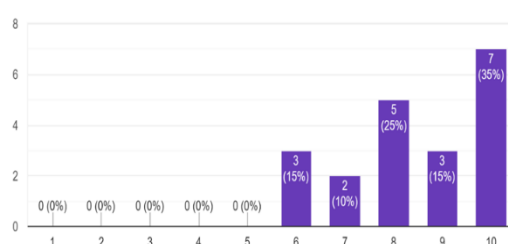
- Opportunities for networking
- Engagement level
- Speakers knowledge and delivery

- Defined and achieved event objectives

Moving forward to networking opportunities, it is clearly seen that the Idea Development Week event was very helpful and offered opportunities for networking. The same concerns the engagement level; almost everyone rated IDW as a very engaging event to participate in. The knowledge of quest speakers and the way of material delivery were also highly rated by IDW event participants. Unlike the clearness of defined and achieve goals which were not set properly in this event. Therefore, most visitors felt like their initial ideas on how the business idea will be developed did not materialize or reach the full potential.

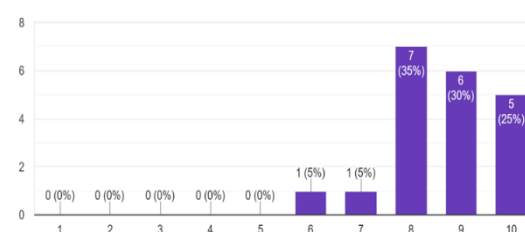
Opportunities for Networking

20 responses



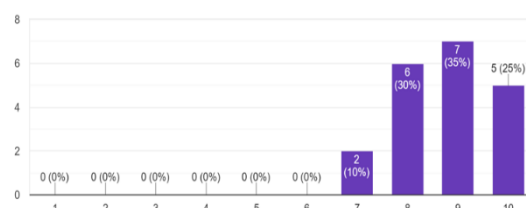
Engagement level

20 responses



Presenter's knowledge and delivery

20 responses



Clearly defined and achieved objectives

20 responses

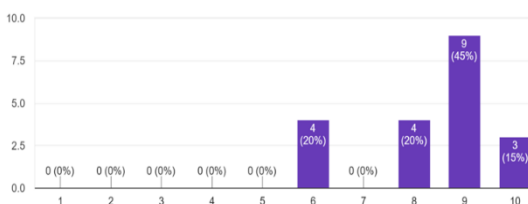


Figure 12. Opportunities for networking

Figure 13. Engagement level

Figure 14. Presenter's knowledge and delivery

Figure 15. Clearly defined and achieved objectives

The next quantitative questions are about the environment and atmosphere at the venue: Company X office location, and how catering and another setup were managed. The results show (figure 16-17) that the facilities were managed at a relatively good level and have been liked by the audience. Another important question that was asked from the participants was "To what degree did this event meet your expectations?"; here, the answer rate was market at the highest 8-10 points by 17 respondents, which is a great outcome for Company X.

Environment (Facilities, setup, etc.)  
20 responses

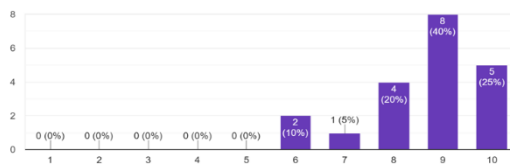


Figure 16. Environment

To which degree did this event meet your expectations?  
20 responses

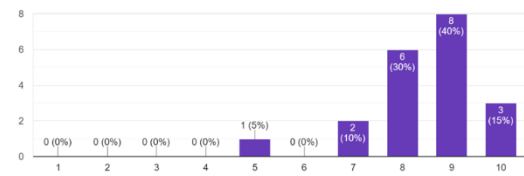


Figure 17. To what degree did this event meet the expectations

The very last quantitative question is about how the attendees' experience level was aligned with the event content. As it can be seen from the figure 18, only around four percent of participants consider event as either too basic or somewhat advanced, then 10% of people think that the material was somewhat basic, and the majority – 80% of people who participated in feedback questionnaires - claims that the content is just what they were expecting and wanted to have at the event.

For your experience level, the event's content was:

20 responses

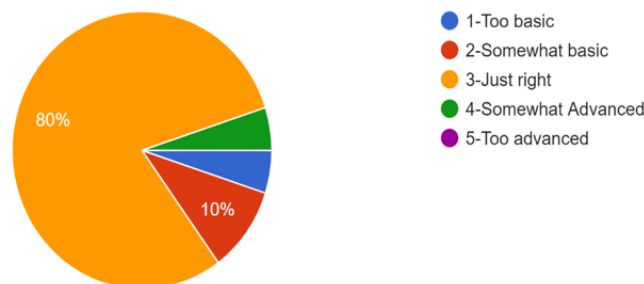


Figure 18. Event content vs. Participants experience level

#### 4.2.2 Qualitative analysis

Qualitative data analysis, unfortunately, occurred to be less meaningful, due to the fact that the questions were not properly designed and organized, that is why the participants answered randomly. Some answers included just marks of a smile, plus or checkmark; other people answered opinion structured questions with ratings like "3 out of 5" or "6 out of 10". The freestyle of those answers cannot provide sufficient data to build up decent qualitative analysis. The results figures can not be represented in that research either due to their untrustworthiness. However, the results anyway can be used to gather the information to improve the possible future events and organization of them.

On the questions, where Company X wondered which topics related to technology, business, and entrepreneurship the respondents would like to listen, the answers included a variety of ideas. For IT and Tech related content, it was advised to have JavaScript, React, Python and other programming languages events that can teach participants something new about coding itself or industry as a whole. Moreover, participants would like to participate in Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence, and BlockChain workshops in the future at Company X.

Entrepreneurship content should be enriched with soft skills education as well as provide future events visitors with discussions about legal details on how to start and run an own business. Further, the given feedback revealed that the audience would like to take part in educational programs/workshops on Digital Marketing, UX Design, Selling Strategies and Service Design. The viewpoint has been really taken into consideration and has been put to future events planning pipeline in Company X.

The last section in the feedback questionnaire and data analysis were the questions about each workshop and guest speaker that took part in the Idea Development Week event. Once again, due to the unsuitable structure of the questions, Company X did not manage to get structured answers and got a variety of them instead. Nevertheless, from the results it was noted that the first workshop about Lean Business Canvas and its presenter was rated with quite good feedback. The following workshop on Day 3 (Wednesday) was about Winning Mentality. This one, participants rated as a good workshop, but not the best one. The reason might be that the presenter became overstressed during the presentation and the audience felt it somewhat boring.

The Pitching workshop was a successful one. Everyone without exception liked the way the speaker presented the material, how he explained the pitching techniques, and also the help in final pitching script preparation for every team.

The last workshop at Idea Development Week event was right before the final pitching competition on the last event day, and it was about how to expand the business internationally. Even though the participants were excited and were waiting for upcoming pitching to the jury, everyone carefully listened to this workshop which was scheduled right before the final pitching presentations. Hence, over one-third of the respondents evaluated the International Expansion talk as good.

The quality of feedback analysis could have been better if originally questions structure were better composed and required standard answers from participants.

### **4.3 Limitations of the study**

The feedbacks and the event ratings are reliable since the answers were received immediately after the end of the event, while the impressions of people are still fresh and not forgotten. However, the evaluation study of the event results was quite limited due to unsuccessfully composed questions and evaluation criteria. In the case of IDW event, the received quantitative answers to close-ended questions were enough to analyze the success and determine the further development of the event. Despite the poorly done questionnaire, an analysis of 20 responses was well carried out manually. However, if the event had been of a larger scale, such an analysis would have not been possible due to a large number of answers. In the future, Company X should revise the structure of its questions in the feedback questionnaire in order to receive more objective and structured answers from participants.

## **5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

In this final chapter, the author discusses how Idea Development Week event in 2019 can be compared to the previous Idea Development Weekend event that took place in 2018. Then, it will be summarized how feedback data analysis results will help in future events organizations. In addition, the author proposes possible developments and recommendations for the Company's X future events.

### **5.1 Comparison to previous events**

Unfortunately, due to the lack of analysis of the previous Idea Development Weekend event, it is impossible to make any solid comparison between IDW 2018 and IDW 2019. Nevertheless, from the feedback that the management team received in 2018, it was noticed that the audience wanted to have more days in the program. That is why this time it has been chosen to have a five-day long program instead of a weekend one, which occurred to be a successful decision. The management team informed that last time the event was organized on the external venue and the show-up rate was much lower than for IDW 2019. Moreover, for a new event brand concept, IDW 2018 previous event managers were not able to carefully choose professional keynote speakers, and that was greatly improved in 2019. Apart from these issues, it is nearly impossible to distinguish any other elements to compare due to the analysis shortage.

### **5.2 Recommendations for Company X**

Analyzing feedback comments has helped Company X to detect limitations of Idea Development Week 2019 and has pointed out issues for the future development in events organization. The main lesson learned for Company X is

that future events should create even more business and career opportunities for their participants.

First of all, next time when this kind of event will be organized, the main program should be developed better without repeating the same workshops and speakers from the previous IDW event. This strategy has to be applied to keep up the interest of people in case the same participants might come again to try the development of their ideas. Updating the event program is always a good sign for visitors as it shows that the company does not stand still, develops and takes into account its previous mistakes. Future guest keynote speakers should be chosen thoroughly and according to their real ability to present material and be an interesting person to listen to. One way to do that is to track if potential speakers usually give the presentations somewhere else and to participate in such activities and personally verify this. The presentations flow should be controlled in the future because speakers tend to give their presentation longer or shorter than planned in the schedule. That means that the presentation duration must be agreed upon in advance. The material used in the presentations could be also sent to participants after each day of the event program. That could be done while sending "Thank you for participation" emails.

Also, the networking opportunities for participants should be improved. In the event program schedule for IDW 2019, there was not enough time for coaches and teams to just mingle and discuss different interesting topics. Therefore, one idea for future events is to have 30 minutes in-between the program schedule during the coffee lunch or save some time after official day wrap up for networking. Another suggestion is to have an additional networking opportunity with the jury on the last day of the IDW program, where it would be possible to get personal feedback on the business idea development. More time for networking should be included in the future IDW events because it brings more value for attendees and guest speakers too.

Event Marketing is another aspect that could be improved later. As it is seen from practice, Facebook groups do really make people interested in the event; however, not that many people really show up at the event. That is why some other marketing activities should be considered when promoting any event at Company X. Brand and event awareness could be achieved by encouraging participants to share the experience with Company X at their social media networks, as the word of mouth works very well these days. Future development also applies to the response (RSVP) system as buttons "I am interested" and "I am going" in the Facebook group does not guarantee that a person will really show up at the event. Due to the limits of the venue capacity and the number of seats available, it is very disappointing when potential attendee shows his/her interest at first, and then do not come and takes someone's else place. Company X also uses the Eventbrite system to check-in people; nevertheless, it seems that such a program does not work very well when the event takes place for more than two days in a row as the same people should be checked-in every day. The event registration gets also more

cumbersome with Eventbrite system because the attendee must issue a ticket by registering his/her personal information before coming to the event, and obviously many people forget to do that, and hence, have to do the registration already at the venue which creates a queue. Moreover, if a person has registered himself/herself in advance but has not shown up, it creates additional incorrect data in the system about the participants' number, and those people have to be erased from the system manually. Therefore, the suggestion for Company X is to brainstorm some other apps that could be used both for RSVP and registration. Future events could use some other online registration system that will not be so time-consuming and will not miss a single guest on the guest list. The personal information must be visible only for Company X staff members to track participants' registration updates. The personal information has to be stored according to GDPR rules.

Finally, the feedback questionnaire forms must be restructured and rephrased for future events. To get more accurate data from participants' feedback, the questions must be formulated clear enough so that visitors will not be hesitant about how to answer the questions. It is a learned lesson for the IDW event 2019, as there were many unclear answers received to open-ended questions in feedback questionnaires. A very common way to improve questionnaires is let more people to check them beforehand and give their comments, and then make the final questionnaire ready. Another recommendation is to include an explanatory sentence before each question, such as "Please provide us with several sentences on how you liked these workshops and the input of the coaches?". Otherwise, people will still continue to answer this kind of questions with smiles, check or plus marks.

## 6 CONCLUSION

To conclude the whole study, the event organization and management theory was carefully researched and studied. The author discussed the planning, preparation, execution, and analyzing steps of the event production. The knowledge received from both literature and online sources was applied when planning and managing the event for Company X.

The Idea Development Week event 2019 can be considered a successful event, as its goals and objectives were achieved, participants developed their business ideas and successfully pitched to the jury. However, obviously, there is always room for improvement in the future to reach the event's highest potential. Idea Development Week managed to involve 35 people who have created nine business ideas in the teams. In the future, event managers together with the management team and guest speakers should inspire participants not to give up their ideas and continue to develop them after the event program ends. The goal of having at least 40 participants was about to be achieved, however only 35 people showed up every five days. Company X should concentrate on the RSVP system, feedback questionnaire restructuring, improving event marketing



and promotion to get better brand awareness. Taking into account these recommendations in the subsequent organization of events, as well as by following this event organization guide, Company X can be confident and guaranteed the success of future events.

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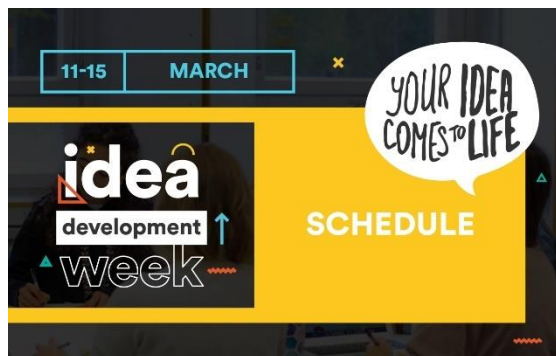
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## IDEA DEVELOPMENT WEEK SCHEDULE



## Day 1 MONDAY

11/03

16:00-16:10	INTRODUCTION
16:10-16:15	EVENT INTRODUCTION
16:15-16:40	INSPIRATIONAL TALK
16:40-17:00	COFFEE BREAK
17:00-17:15	IDEAS PITCHING
18:15-18:30	VOTING AND TEAM BUILDING
18:30-18:45	COMMUNICATION AND DISCUSSION
18:45-19:00	NEXT DAY INFO

## Day 2 TUESDAY

12/03

16:00-16:10	DAY INTRODUCTION
16:10-16:40	LEAN BUSINESS CANVAS WORKSHOP
16:40-17:20	TEAMWORK
17:20-17:35	BREAK
17:35-18:20	LEAN BUSINESS CANVAS WORKSHOP CONT.
18:20-18:55	TEAMWORK
18:55-19:00	NEXT DAY INFO

## Day 3 WEDNESDAY

13/03

16:00-16:30	Q & A SESSION ON CANVAS
16:30-17:00	TRICKS ON FUNDING WORKSHOP
17:00-17:15	COFFEE BREAK
17:15-18:00	IDEA DEVELOPMENT TEAMWORK
18:00-18:45	WINNING MENTALITY WORKSHOP
18:45-19:00	NEXT DAY INFO

## Day 4 THURSDAY

14/03

16:00-16:15	INTRO TO THE DAY
16:15-17:00	PITCHING WORKSHOP
17:00-17:15	COFFEE BREAK
17:15-17:45	PRESENTATION SLIDES PREPARATION
17:45-18:45	REHEARSAL
18:45-19:00	PRESENTATION SUBMISSION

## Day 5 FRIDAY

15/03

16:00-16:10	INTRO TO THE DAY
16:10-16:55	WORKSHOP
16:45-17:00	PREPARATION TO THE FINAL PITCH
17:00-17:15	JURY INTRODUCTION
17:15-18:30	PITCHING TO THE JURY
18:30-18:40	SELECTION CRITERIA EXPLANATION
18:40-17:00	ANNOUNCING THE WINNER + CLOSING WORDS

## IDEA DEVELOPMENT WEEK FACEBOOK POSTER



## IDEA DEVELOPMENT WEEK FEEDBACK FORM

**Idea Development Week, 11-15 March 2019****1. Please rate your level of satisfaction with the following aspects of the training. (1 Low - 10 High)**

Overall	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Content	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Methods & tools	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Relevance/usefulness to your current/future career	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Opportunities for Networking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Engagement level	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Presenter's knowledge & delivery	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Clearly defined & achieved objectives	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Environment (Facilities, setup, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**2. To what degree did this event meet your expectations? (1 Not at all - 10 Completely)**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**3. For your experience level, the event's content was:**

1- Too Basic    2-Somewhat Basic    3-Just Right    4-Somewhat Advanced    5-Too advanced

**4. What topic(s) would you like to hear more about in the future? Please specify:**

Programming language(s):.....

Tech-related (AI, Machine learning, etc):.....

Business (Digital Marketing, Service Design, etc):.....

Entrepreneurship:.....

Other:.....

**5. How did you like these workshops and coaches input?**

Lean Business Canvas Workshop(Tuesday):.....

Winning Mentality Workshop(Wednesday):.....

Pitching Workshop (Thursday):.....

International Expansion Workshop (Friday):.....

Coaches:.....

**Other feedback:**.....

.....

.....

**THANK YOU!**